

# Home, Lawn & Garden

## Add some green – plant a tree

(NC)—Fall is a good time to plant a tree. Make it a fun family project by following these easy steps.

Trees are an important part of our lives, providing cool shade during hot summer days and helping to remove harmful greenhouse gases from the environment. They also look beautiful. Fall's cooler temperatures and plentiful rainfall makes it a good time to plant a tree. Here's how.

### 1. Choose a Tree

Whether deciduous or evergreen, choose a tree just like Goldilocks picked the right bed – not too small and not too big; the mature size should be just right for your backyard. Red maples are suitable

for large suburban properties while amur maples fit nicely into a city site. The right amount of light is important too. Some prefer full sun, such as beech and mulberry and others tolerate some shade – redbuds and hemlocks, for example.

### 2. Dig In

The planting hole needs to be the right size too. It should be as deep as the pot your tree comes in from the nursery and twice as wide to allow the roots to spread outward. In heavy clay, scrape the sides of the hole to loosen the soil. This makes it easier for the roots to grow into the surrounding ground. Fill the hole with water, right up to the rim,

and allow it to drain.

### 3. Get Rooted

Remove the sapling from its container and gently but firmly tease out the roots. These feed the tree, so it's important to encourage these fibrous "feelers" to spread out into the hole, especially if they've circled around in the pot, so the roots can find the nutrients they need for healthy growth.

### 4. Tuck it In

Place the tree into the hole, making sure it sits at the same height as it did in the pot – not too deep and not too high – just at ground level. Fill in the hole around the root ball with soil, firming it with your hands as you go to eliminate air pockets,

which can cause the soil to sink. Lay a mulch of shredded cedar or other organic material around the base of the tree, about eight centimetres deep and as far out as the branches grow. Scoop the centre of the mulch away from the trunk, using it to make a "donut" around the tree, which acts as a reservoir. Make sure your new tree receives at least 2.5 centimetres of water weekly, from now until the ground freezes, either from rainfall or a sprinkler.

### 5. Call it Your Own

Make your tree part of the family. Give it a name – Maggie Magnolia or Charlie the Horsechestnut – and watch it grow.



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